

Contingency Plans = Survival!

The last Tip, [“The ‘Oops’ Factor of Risk Management”](#) introduced Contingency Planning as a business survival tool. I said these plans are simple but detailed.

How can you create effective plans that will produce great outcomes in a crisis situation? Checklists or outlines are great tools – and they can grow and adapt easily to new situations or updated lessons. Start at a high level and work down to more detail.

What’s great is you’ll soon start to see patterns of solutions that can work for several scenarios. And even better, these “solutions” can often become *immediate improvements* to current operations or processes, making them faster, simpler, and more reliable.

Your “No Surprises” Toolkit ~

Start by listing what can go wrong or any problems that might need a solution. Add notes about 1) who can help – both inside and outside your company, and 2) who can provide input – now, in advance – about possible plans. Continue by adding contact information for the key players, documents or form letters you might need, etc.

Here are some examples of problems and possible contingency plans to prepare ~

- Customer Service Snafu: describe what this could be ...
 - Who should handle the problem and fix it?
 - What prevention steps can you take right now?
- Computer or data problem: describe what could go wrong ...
 - Who knows your system best and how to fix serious issues?
 - What regular updates or changes can be made now or scheduled?
- Supplier failure: describe impact(s) to you ...
 - List suppliers and products/ services.
 - What alternatives do you have?
 - What new relationships can you create now?
- Key employee disaster: list key people and the impacts of a loss ...
 - What cross-training or documentation can happen for backup?
 - Use teamwork for broader business relationships with clients.
- Crisis situation: describe scenarios that put your reputation at risk ...
 - What actions might be needed?
 - Which team members are best; which need some training?
 - Designate spokesperson, draft messages, and practice!

Contingency plans are not only critical for survival in the future, but also create great power for your business today. You can even discuss them in sales proposals to underline your competitive advantage of being prepared for when the inevitable problem hits. You have the roadmap and tools to react quickly and fix it.

Don’t hesitate to contact me to discuss your situation and questions.